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Excellency the Governor as well as by the opinions he receives from his colleagues in the Cabinet. Before he answers my question whether he proposes to take any action, I presume that he would have normally placed the figures of voting before His Excellency the Governor and his colleagues in the Cabinet and asked their advice. I am asking, therefore, whether he did so in that capacity."

The hon. the RAJA OF PANAGAL :—" There was no necessity for my placing the figures before His Excellency, and so I did not."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" May I ask the hon. the Chief Minister one more question, Sir? Subsequent to the voting on the ' No-Confidence ' Motion, three capital incidents have happened in this House; first, the defeat of the Court-fees Act Amendment Bill introduced by the hon. the Law Member and seconded by the hon. the Minister for Education; secondly, the voting upon the Coimbatore water-supply scheme where the Ministry had a majority of four; and lastly, Sir, the voting yesterday on the amendment of Mr. O. Tanikachala Chettiyar to my Motion to boycott the British Empire Exhibition, where we had an elected majority of ten members on our side. I ask him whether, with his knowledge of constitutional precedents and the working of the Reforms Act in this country and the working of responsible government in other countries, he still considers he has got a working majority to occupy his position as Chief Minister."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" It is very clear the hon. Member has delivered a speech instead of putting a supplementary question. Secondly, assuming that it is a question, it is far beyond the range of what is understood to be a supplementary question, and, therefore, I cannot allow this to go on."

TAXATION.

Enhancement of salt tax.

38 Q.—Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR : Will the hon. the Member for Finance be pleased to state whether the Government authorized their representative in the Imperial Legislative Assembly, Mr. Moir, to express their approval of the enhancement of the salt tax, subject to or free of any qualifications?

A.—The Government gave no specific instructions to Mr. Moir nor did he express their approval of the enhancement of the salt tax. Individual members of the Government were, however, aware that he proposed to support the Finance Bill in the hope thereby of securing a remission of part of the Madras contribution to the Government of India, and they approved his attitude for the following among other reasons :—

The revenue anticipated in a normal year from the restoration of the salt tax to the old rate of Rs. 2-8-0 per maund was six crores of rupees. If that sum had been applied to the reduction of the Provincial contributions, the amount due to Madras would have been Rs. 268 lakhs. The salt tax payable by the Madras Presidency at Rs. 1-4-0 a maund on a normal consumption of 16 pounds per head of the population is Rs. 104 lakhs. It was considered preferable for Imperial taxation to be imposed on the whole of India than for the

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Presidency to pay, out of the taxes assigned to the Provincial Government, a most disproportionately heavy contribution towards the expenses of the Government of India.

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—“ May I know, Sir, who the individual members of the Government were who were aware of the intention on the part of Mr. Moir ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ I can answer for myself, Sir ; but, at this distance of time, I cannot speak exactly on behalf of my hon. Colleagues.”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ May I ask whether the hon. the Finance Member had any formal or informal communication with Mr. Moir after he became aware of his support to the enhancement of the salt tax ? ”

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—“ May I ask, Sir, the Leader of the House, with your permission. . . . ”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ On a point of order. I should like to have my question answered, Sir.”

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ Two or three supplementary questions may be put ; there is no harm in that.”

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—“ If I have interrupted my hon. Friend, I beg his pardon. I ask the hon. the Leader of the House, not as the Finance Member, but as the Leader of the House, whether or not it is a fact that our Government was consulted by the Government of India with respect to the enhancement of the salt duty, and whether in that connexion the hon. the Ministers were not consulted, and whether they did not give their approval either with or without conditions ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ So far as I can recollect, Sir, there was no consultation by the Government of India with this Government. As regards Mr. Satyamurti's question, I am sorry I did not understand it.”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ I shall repeat my question, Sir. Did the hon. the Finance Member communicate with Mr. Moir formally or informally after he became aware of the proposal of Mr. Moir to express his approval of the enhancement of the salt tax, and if so, what did he tell him ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ Mr. Moir sent an informal communication to me and I told him that I agreed with his sentiments.”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ That is what I wanted, Sir.”

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—“ In that connexion, Sir, I beg to ask the Leader of the House one question, whether he gave that opinion as the opinion of the Government including the Transferred half, or in his individual capacity as Finance Member ? If he had done it in his individual capacity, may I venture to submit that Mr. Moir was perhaps going beyond his instructions when in effect he declared there that the Madras Government would be in favour, provided the iniquitous impost was reduced ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ The reply to that is that Mr. Moir declared nothing of the sort.”

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—“ I want to know whether the correspondence between the Leader of the House and Mr. Moir was in his

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official capacity or private capacity. If it was in his official capacity, I want to know whether he had any consultation with the other Members of the Cabinet before he gave his approval to the proposed action on the part of Mr. Moir."

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI:—"Just one word, Sir. The reply as given is 'individual Members of the Government were, however, aware that he proposed to support the Finance Bill' and so on. If my hon. Friend, the Leader of the House, would only answer for himself, then we would have to put the question seriatim as in a class room to each and every Member of the Government present here. So, we would like to have an answer from the hon. Member, as Leader of the House, as to how many were consulted, whether the hon. the Ministers were not consulted either formally or informally, and what replies they gave, whether there were any individual differences, whether the opinion of the majority prevailed, or all agreed as to the course of action that Mr. Moir proposed to take."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"Sir, I have already told the hon. Member that the whole question is based on false premises. 'The Government gave no specific instructions to Mr. Moir, nor did Mr. Moir express their approval of the enhancement of the salt tax.' I might have answered the question in those words and left it there. But I have endeavoured to answer as fully as I can, acting upon my recollection of an event of ten months ago. I have said I cannot remember exactly, but I am quite prepared to take the responsibility for any advice that I gave to Mr. Moir."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"May I again ask the hon. the Finance Member whether in giving the advice or instructions to Mr. Moir, to express his approval to the enhancement of the salt tax, he consulted formally or informally his Colleagues in the Cabinet, especially the Ministers, and, if so, what their opinions were?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The hon. Member has already said that he has not done so."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"I will repeat my question. Sir, I want to know from the hon. the Finance Member whether, before he in his own individual capacity wrote to Mr. Moir expressing his approval of his proposal to approve the enhancement of the salt tax, he consulted, formally or informally, his Colleagues in the Cabinet, especially the Ministers? That I suppose is a plain question."

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI:—"I am sorry I have to say one other word, Sir. May I with your permission, Sir, ask whether we can unreservedly accept my hon. Friend's statement that no instructions were issued before Mr. Moir took the action that he took, but that evidently subsequent approval was given? With respect to that approval, I would ask, with all due respect once again, who were the hon. Colleagues of his that were consulted, whether the hon. Ministers were consulted, and what opinion was given by them individually, or in their collective capacity? I think the House is entitled to know that, because it is a matter of very great public importance."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"In reply, Sir, may I ask the hon. Member to read Mr. Moir's speech, which will give him a full answer to his question?"

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Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"That does not answer my question, Sir. My question is within the peculiar knowledge of the hon. the Leader of the House and nobody else. What I want to know, Sir, is whether he, with his present recollection of the event, will tell this House if, in his individual capacity as Finance Member, he consulted formally or informally his colleagues in the Cabinet, especially the Ministers?"

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—"Before the salt tax was certified, Sir, did not the Government of India consult this Government also, as it was reported that they consulted all provincial Governments, as regards their probable attitude of what their advice in that matter would be before the certification."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—"I have already told the House, Sir, that I cannot speak with exactitude of conversations of ten months ago, and I have already told the House that I have no recollection—I may be quite wrong—but I have no recollection of any such consultation with the Government of India as is suggested."

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—"May I request my hon. Friend to make a statement on this subject to-morrow? I certainly feel that at this date he may not probably remember."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"Does the hon. Member think that probably the hon. the Finance Member's memory will improve within the next twenty-four hours?" (Laughter.)

Mr. C. RAMALINGA REDDI :—"I thought he might consult the records, Sir. I did not mean anything so unpsychological as that."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"May I submit, Sir, that my question still remains unanswered?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I dare say it is. Honourable Members are aware that a Member of Government is not bound to answer when questions are put."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"May I ask the hon. Member to get up and say that he cannot answer?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"The hon. Member is not bound to get up and say he cannot answer. His silence means (laughter) that."

II

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF INDUSTRIES.

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I have to inform the House that at the election held on the 11th December 1923 the following Members have been elected to be the Council's representatives on the Board of Industries :—

Diwan Bahadur K. Suryanarayanamurti Nayudu.

Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti."

III

MOTIONS ON MATTERS OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST.

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"The Council will now resume discussion of Motions on matters of general public interest. The first is the Motion of Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar as amended by Mr. P. Siva Rao."